

## From the Editor

**MATERIEL.** Few words mean so much to a soldier. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines it as "Equipment, apparatus and supplies used by an organization or institution." But, to the Army Materiel Command, it means if a soldier shoots it, drives it, flies it, wears it or eats it, AMC provides it. In "Army Materiel Command — Paving the Way to the Army's Future," Soldiers' award-winning journalist Heike Hasenauer takes a look at the AMC's enormous responsibility and daunting mission.

For a look at materiel in action, Heike takes us next to the mud of Grafenwöhr and the dust of Hohenfels. In "Europe's Premier Training Sites," Heike showcases the 7th Army Training Command's proud history and important role in keeping U.S. Army Europe's fighting edge sharp.

In "The Dawn of the Modern Army," Steve Harding interviews Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Rick Atkinson about his upcoming book on the United States' often-overlooked World War II campaign in North Africa. Atkinson shows us how the lessons we learned there not only helped ensure later successes in the battle against Nazi Germany, but also would affect changes that result in the Army we see today.

*John C. Suttle*

## EOD in the Spotlight

I WAS most interested in your June articles "The Difference Between Life and Death" and "EOD in Afghanistan." It is always nice to see articles about a facet of military operations that often goes unremarked, and the photographs were first-rate.

I've always been at a loss to explain why those of us in the "bomb disposal" business ever get involved in it. I don't know that "honor and a sense of duty" (MSG Hamann's answer) fully covers it, but it's as good an explanation as any I've been able to come up with.

I have been involved in EOD since beginning my initial ammunition technical officer training in the United Kingdom in 1988, and it's been a very

rewarding career choice. I heartily recommend it.

As a retired member of the Canadian Forces, now serving in the New Zealand Army, I was also pleased to see Canadian EOD personnel getting some ink as well.

Congratulations on a couple of great stories and a very enjoyable magazine.

*Maj. David O. Buck, RNZALR*  
Via e-mail

## Casualty Notification

YOUR June article "Reaching Out to the Bereaved" was an excellent look at a very serious subject.

However, the comment attributed to LTC Rita Salley that "...during the early years of the Vietnam War, when the Army had no certified death-

notification or assistance program, and taxi drivers were commissioned to notify families...." does not appear to be a true statement. I was appointed as a casualty-notification officer (CNO) while assigned to Western Area, Military Traffic Management Command, with duty at Norton Air Force Base, Calif., in 1965 and 1966.

During my one-year tour I had at least six assignments to notify next of kin of casualties, all of whom had been killed or wounded in Vietnam.

CNO visits were followed by an official Department of the Army telegram confirming the information provided and, which were followed by the assistance provided by the casualty-assistance officer. My experience was that the Adjutant General's Casualty Assistance Office had a clear and serious program of casualty notification and assistance to next of kin at that time.

*LTC Richard Robinson (Ret.)*  
Via e-mail

## No Service for Athletes?

IN talking about West Point graduate and professional athlete Andy Lundbohm, the back cover of the July issue furthers the belief that officers, and especially U.S. Military Academy graduates, "get over on the system."

I am a 1992 USMA graduate and I wonder how, despite federal law requiring five years of active-duty service (Title 10, Section 4348 of the U.S. Code; see also AR 350-100, paragraph 2-2b) a USMA graduate can get out of his obligation so early. While commissioned into the Army Reserve (as all USMA graduates now are), Mr.



## Kwaj Kudos

I JUST finished reading your completely satisfying July article on the Kwajalein Missile Range.

I lived on Kwaj from 1976 to 1980 as one of three young adults who had just graduated from high school. Because our parents were site managers of their companies, we secured jobs before arriving on Kwaj. This put us in a unique category, since to live there you had to work there, and what few jobs were not filled by contractors were usually filled by spouses. As a result, there was a 10-year gap in ages between Kwaj's high-schoolers and the average age of a contracted worker. The three of us filled that gap while stationed at one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Almost 22 years have passed since I left Kwajalein, and I have had the opportunity to travel and deploy to some beautiful and memorable places on this planet both as a civilian and as an Army officer. However, Kwajalein still retains its charm and allure — both of which your excellent article helped rekindle with thoughtful and comprehensive text, and multifaceted photos.

Thank you for taking this old "Meck Mouse, Roi-Rat, and Kwaj-Kat" back home again.

*CPT Doug Duecker*  
Fort Jackson, S.C.

Lundbohm should have served the five years of active duty required by federal law. Obviously, he did not.

It's sad that the back cover article makes USMA's athletic programs look like a stepping stone to professional sports and not the laboratory for developing the future leaders of the soldiers reading *Soldiers*.

When GEN of the Army Douglas MacArthur said of USMA athletics, "Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that upon other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory" he was talking about applying USMA's lessons to combat, not to the professional ice hockey rink.

As a taxpayer, let alone a fellow graduate, I am embarrassed and infuriated that \$250,000 of my tax dollars were used to develop a full-time professional athlete and

not a full-time officer. If Roger Staubach could complete his active-duty commitment before becoming a professional athlete, every other USMA graduate can too!

*CPT Joe Berger  
Fort Bliss, Texas*

## More on the Beret

I AM an AGR National Guard recruiter, longtime reader and first-time writer.

The original viewpoint expressing active-duty priority concerning the issue of berets doesn't bother me. What does, however, are those respondents who have turned this obvious logistics issue into a "respect" issue. We all are aware of the vital role reservists and guard members play in our nation's defense, but at the moment, there aren't enough berets to go around.

Stop whining and get back

to work! That's how you earn respect, sergeants!

*SSG Koley O. Scott  
Via e-mail*

## Gitmo Accommodations

IS it me, or did the pictures in the July issue show that the "detainees" at Guantanamo, Cuba, (the ones our European "allies" are so worried about) live better than the soldiers who guard them?

*SFC Shawn W. McElravy  
Via e-mail*

## Medical Aid in Bosnia

FIRST, I want to thank you for such an excellent article on Bosnia in your August issue.

As a member of Task

Force Eagle, I read it with pride. Our soldiers are making a huge difference in support of the Dayton Peace Accords. As the Medical Task Force command sergeant major, I found your articles and illustrations about TF Medical Eagle both accurate and informative.

Soldiers from both the active and reserve components and from several installations and states have formed a compassionate and visible team dedicated to providing healthcare to the soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division. Although our rotation will end and we will return to our families, the Bosnia experience will stay with us forever.

*CSM Hiram Ortiz  
Via e-mail*

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